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Hurricane Ike threatens Texas

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As the hurricane season continues all eyes now turn to Hurricane Ike. Following fast on the heels of Hurricanes Gustav and Hanna, Ike has already killed more than 70 people in the Caribbean, with Haiti and Cuba particularly badly hit.

Now it is heading for the coast of Texas, where evacuations are taking place because of fears of a storm surge of up to 20 feet above normal tide levels.

The Met Office provides forecast information of tropical storms and hurricanes from its unified model twice daily to its colleagues at the National Hurricane Center (NHC) in Miami. This valuable information is used by forecasters in the NHC when compiling the official forecasts of track and landfall of hurricanes and tropical storms, and the issue of warnings to affected areas.

The latest forecast indicates that the centre of the hurricane will come ashore near Galveston at around 6 a.m. Saturday UK time. However, Ike is a large hurricane and much of the Texas and Louisiana coast are already being affected. British holidaymakers and those with friends and family on the Gulf coast of the United States will be paying close attention to the NHC advice and warnings for wind, rain and storm surges.

The Met Office has a responsibility to protect the lives of British citizens abroad and issues regular briefings to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for tropical cyclones around the globe throughout the year. In addition the Met Office provides forecast information to humanitarian agencies and the insurance industry, giving advanced notice for mitigating action.

The latest forecast tracks can be found at the National Hurricane Center website.

North America satellite image

More about tropical cyclones

Notes:

The Met Office is also providing forecast information on the progress of Ike to government departments to help deal with the situation. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development (DFID) are responsible for issuing advice to British Nationals in the area.

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